

Signal Soldiers show Fort Hood to visiting Boy Scouts

By Capt. Michael Greenberger

3rd Sig. Bde. PAO

Soldiers from the 57th Signal Battalion hosted 14 Boy Scouts from Troop 15 out of Sherman, Texas, Saturday.

Scouts and Scout leaders were billeted at North Fort Hood, where they began their day at 6 a.m., assembling for a P.T. challenge with Staff Sgt. Tommy Archie, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 57th Sig. Bn. In the early-morning rain, Archie led the Scouts in basic stretches and calisthenics, including push-ups, sit-ups, flutter-kicks and a short run. In spite of the cold and mud, the Scouts enthusiastically followed Archie's directions.

Next, the Scouts boarded a bus and visited the new Forward Operating Base training area on North Fort Hood.

Master Sgt. Charles Winnicki, of the 2nd Battalion, 75th Division (Training) met the Scouts in the FOB to brief them on FOB operations such as checkpoint control procedures and tactical operations. Winnicki also told the Scouts how Soldiers are trained at the FOB, covering subjects like force protection, civilians on the battlefield, dealing with insurgents, FOB infrastructure, and the civilian contractors' role in FOB operations.

Winnicki described the FOB as a "total immersion" training experience for Soldiers who come to the training area prior to deploying overseas. "Any place a Soldier deploys in the world, we train them right here using the facilities on Fort Hood," Winnicki said.

Sgt. Luis Chavez talked to the Scouts about his experiences in Iraq, covering topics such as FOB security, weapon systems, night sights, types of people coming and going at an FOB, and civilian contractors, who are responsible for maintenance of the FOB and the care and feeding of its Soldiers.

The Scouts listened intently and asked questions, such as, "Did you know who the enemy was?"

Chavez responded that at first there was a clear line and those on the other side of it were clearly the enemy. Now, there is no line and you are forced to "trust nothing, question everything," he said.

The training at the FOB is exactly the kind of experiences Soldiers can expect to have in a deployed forward area, so the importance of realism and accuracy is paramount. That realism was evident when a group of "Iraqi citizens" mobbed the Scouts and engaged them in conversation, giving them a glimpse of the diversity present in the Iraqi civilian population and the challenges Soldiers face interacting with them.

Following their soggy FOB tour, Scouts went on to eat brunch at the 3rd Sig. Bde. and III Corps Support Command consolidated dining facility. Sgt. Maj. Anna Gregory and other HHC, 57th Sig. Bn. NCOs escorted the group as they got their first taste of "Army chow."

After

"refueling" at the dining facility, the group moved on to the 1st Cavalry Division Museum. The Scouts toured the outdoor portion of the museum where they learned about Army combat vehicles of the past and present, as well as a glimpse of vehicles and equip-



Photo by Capt. Michael Greenberger, 3rd Sig Bde. PAO

Members of the Boy Scouts braved the rain to meet with 3rd Sig. Bde. and 75th Div. Soldiers during a training session at the FOB on North Fort Hood.

Boy Scouts visit Hood

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captured in previous conflicts.

From the museum they went to Hood Army Airfield where Maj. Shane Curtis of the 4th Battalion, 227th Attack Reconnaissance Regiment, showed off the 1st Cavalry Division's newest addition, the AH-64D Longbow Apache attack helicopter. Curtis opened a helicopter and allowed the Scouts the opportunity to sit in the cockpit while answering questions like, "How much does one of these cost?" and, "What do you have to do to become a pilot?"

Nearing the day's end, the group proceeded to the 1st Cav. Div. Horse Detachment where the

Scouts were met by Soldiers of the detachment, who gave them a tour of the facility and allowed the Scouts to interact with the famous horses. With smiles from ear to ear, the Scouts walked from fence to fence, petting and meeting each animal in the detachment.

No visit to Fort Hood is complete without a visit to the 1st Cav. Div. Museum Gift Shop. After seeing the Cavalry Horses, the Scouts were anxious to pick up some Cav memorabilia.

The Scouts finished their day with the 57th Sig. Bn. in their motor pool, where the group was instructed on modern Army Signal Corps equipment and methods of keeping Soldiers connected and communicating.